



# The Phyllis Schlafly Report



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## Whose Values Do Public Schools Teach?

One day, a reader wrote to Ann Landers about an Escondido, California, English class where the students were required to write a paper on the "Worst Case Final Disaster." The students were given the first part of the story and instructed to complete it.

The story was as follows: "Sixteen people were in a bomb shelter that could support only ten. Survival on the outside was impossible. The student had to choose which ten people should be allowed to remain. Six people had to be turned out to certain death."

One student refused to complete the paper because it violated her religious principles to decide that some lives are less valuable than others, and because the lesson taught that disposal of the less worthy is the only acceptable answer. Ann Landers defended the assignment because, she said, "it is unrealistic to assume that all human beings are equally valuable ... and young people should learn how to make informed, intelligent choices."

This bomb shelter case is one of several variations of the "Lifeboat Game," which tells schoolchildren that ten persons are in a sinking lifeboat, and requires the student to select which five of the ten must be thrown out to drown. Shall it be the pregnant woman, or the senior citizen, or the handicapped person, or the scientist, or the minister, or the coed, or the policeman? Whom shall we save and whom shall we eliminate? "None of the above" is not an acceptable answer.

Most public school children of the last decade have been subjected to some variation of this "disaster" lesson at least once. One newspaper reporter told me that she had the exercise in almost every level of elementary and secondary school.

These macabre "games" come from a book called *Values Clarification* by Sidney Simon. A 1972 book, surprisingly, it still is in print and available in bookstores. It is a collection of 79 "strategies" that force the child into moral dilemmas or privacy-invading situations from which a religious or moral point of view is excluded. Simon popularized the term "values clarification," but it is essentially the same technique known to orators and debaters for centuries as the "false alternative." Force your

audience to choose between the alternatives *you* select while excluding other alternatives that don't suit your purposes.

Thus, in one school recently, a child answered the lifeboat question by saying, "Jesus brought another boat so no one had to drown." Her innovative response was deemed unacceptable by the teacher, and the child received an "F".

Over the past decade, many scholarly criticisms of values clarification have been published which corroborate parental objections. For example, Professor Richard A. Baer of Cornell University has written that values clarification indoctrinates children with "radical ethical relativism."

That means that it teaches the particular value position that all values are subjective and matters of individual choice, and that personal pleasure is the highest good in life. Values clarification is a form of psychotherapy which teaches a profound bias against authority, traditional morality, and duty.

Another typical values clarification exercise asks, "How do you feel about premarital sex?" The student is required to position himself somewhere between Virginal Virginia (sometimes called Gloves Gladys) and Mattress Millie. Virginal Virginia "wears white gloves on every date," and Mattress Millie "wears a mattress strapped to her back."

Baer and other critics ask whether it is reasonable to expect students, especially the shy or insecure ones, to take anything other than a middle-of-the-road position in the face of such extremes presented by the authority figure in the classroom combined with peer pressure from classmates.

Baer points out that, when values clarification asserts that the individual is the final arbiter of truth and moral choice, it infringes on religion. Thus, he says, if the statement that "God is the final arbiter of truth in the realm of values" is a religious statement and barred from public schools, then the contrary, "God is NOT the final arbiter of truth in the realm of values" is also a religious statement and should likewise be banned. Yet, this latter statement is the basic dogma of values clarification.

Baer concludes that "it is intolerable in a society such as ours to have the authors press it on a semicaptive audience of students in a public school setting as THE truth about values

and human beings. This represents a gross violation of the doctrine of the separation of church and state."

## The Alabama Textbook Decision

At last! A federal court has held that children who believe in God have the same rights in a public school classroom as atheists. All children now have the right to attend a public school without having somebody else's religion crammed down their throats by textbook or teacher.

The court held that the First Amendment's Establishment Clause not only prohibits teaching children to believe in God and His eternal moral commandments, but likewise prohibits teaching children NOT to believe in God and NOT to believe in eternal moral values. The judge ordered 45 textbooks removed from the Alabama public schools because they engage in an unconstitutional establishment of the religion of "secular humanism."

This case, *Smith v. Mobile School Board*, started in 1981 as an attempt by the atheists to ban a moment of silent prayer from the Alabama public school classrooms. The atheists won in 1985 in the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Wallace v. Jaffree*.

The district court then restructured the case to hear the complaint of other parents who asserted that THEIR First Amendment rights were interfered with because the textbooks were teaching the religion of secular humanism. The parents asserted that "a man-centered belief-system, which they know by the appellation 'secular humanism,' is promoted in the public schools to the detriment of their children's First Amendment right of free exercise, all in violation of the Establishment Clause."

The Mobile case answers the question, "what is humanism?" It denies a Creator, asserts that the universe is self-existing, that man is the product of evolutionary forces and has no supernatural component, that man's purpose is to seek personal fulfillment, and that the rules governing conduct are founded only in man's situation and environment.

This case was not an attempt of narrow-minded or fanatical proreligionists to force a public school system to teach only those opinions and facts with which they agree. This case is about the "improper promotion of certain religious beliefs, thus violating the constitutional prohibitions against the establishment of religion."

The parents did not seek to impose their own religious beliefs on the schools, nor did they seek to keep their children from mere exposure to contrary beliefs or ideas. The court found that the parents simply sought "objective education, not partisan indoctrination."

The U.S. Supreme Court has never defined religion, but has shifted over the years from monotheism to a broad notion of ultimate concerns and equivalent beliefs. The scope of the term religion was first carefully examined by the Supreme Court in the 1965 *Seeger* draft exemption case, wherein the Court refused to limit the First Amendment right to theism only.

Two bodies of evidence were presented to the court and set forth in the Alabama textbook decision. First was the overt

teaching of the tenets of secular humanism. Second was the omission of "significant facts about religion and religious contributions to American history" to the extent that the textbooks "conveyed an historical picture biased against theistic religions."

The result was that "religion was so deliberately under-emphasized and ignored that theistic religions were effectively discriminated against and made to seem irrelevant and unimportant within the context of American history." The court said that "the factual inaccuracies are so grave as to rise to a constitutional violation."

So, the court held that "the challenged textbooks violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution" and issued an injunction to prohibit further use of the listed books.

The Alabama textbook decision concluded that the First Amendment's requirement of religious neutrality means that the Constitution protects every religious belief without regard to its theological foundations or idiosyncrasies. There is much more evidence that secular humanism is taught in textbooks today than that religion can be taught by a moment of silence in which God's name is never mentioned.

The secular liberals, who have been imposing their peculiar religion on schoolchildren for the last 30 years, are having tantrums in the media about Judge Hand's decision. What they are really angry about is that this decision has brought Secular Humanism out of the closet for the public to see and to learn why the public schools have produced so many children who are incapable of telling right from wrong.

## The Minnesota School Survey

A privacy-invading questionnaire given in Minnesota public schools in December 1986 proves how arrogant some educators have become in treating schoolchildren like guinea pigs. Seventh to twelfth grade children in the Minnesota public schools were required to fill out an hour-long 189-question survey about sex, suicide, drugs, and family behavior.

First, the survey made the children answer questions about all sorts of private family matters, such as "do you think of yourself as a religious person?", whether your parents are divorced or "were never married," whether your mother lives with "another man I am not related to," and whether your parents are employed.

Then the survey took the child through a long series of questions suggesting that he must be worried about many things. Options for these worries included "dying soon," "a nuclear bomb being dropped on America," "one of my parents dying," "one of my parents hitting me so hard that I will be hurt," "my parents getting a divorce," "killing myself," and "someone may force me to do sexual things I don't want to do."

Then the survey asked, "how often do you use the following: cigarettes, clove cigarettes, chewing tobacco/snuff, beer/wine, hard liquor, marijuana, PCP/angel dust, acid/LSD/psychedelics, bindro (stars/hex), inhalants (glue/pop-pers), speed/amphetamines, sedatives/downers, cocaine

(coke/toot/snow), crack/rock cocaine, heroin, codeine/morphine/other opiates, look-alike drugs?"

The questionnaire then moved into an explicit interrogation about the child's sex habits. "Have you ever had sexual intercourse ('gone all the way')? If yes, how old were you the first time you did it? How often do you have sexual intercourse? What kind of birth control do you most often use? When you think or daydream about sex, do you think about (a) males, (b) females, (c) both?"

Imagine the poor seventh grader wrestling with the next sex-related question, and note the sequence. "Which of the following best describes your feelings: (a) I am ONLY attracted to people of the SAME sex as mine, and I will only be sexual with persons of the same sex. (b) I am STRONGLY attracted to people of the SAME sex and most of my sexual experiences will be with persons of the same sex as mine. (c) I am EQUALY attracted to men and women and would like to be sexual with both. (d) I am STRONGLY attracted to persons of the OPPOSITE sex and most of my sexual experience will be with persons of the opposite sex. (e) I am ONLY attracted to persons of the OPPOSITE sex and I will only be sexual with persons of the opposite sex."

Another set of questions would tend to alienate children from their parents. "If you had the chance to see a doctor, nurse or counselor without your parents knowing about it, would you have gone?" "Do you know of a place to go to see a doctor, nurse or counselor without your parents knowing about it?"

Then came a long line of questioning practically guaranteed to give the child a case of depression. "Have you felt so sad, discouraged, hopeless, or had so many problems that you wondered if anything was worthwhile?" "Have you worried that you might be losing your mind or losing control over the way you act, talk, think, feel, or of your memory?" "Have you felt anxious, worried or upset?"

"Have you ever had a nervous breakdown or lost your mind?" "Have you ever tried to kill yourself?" "In the past month: (a) I don't have any thoughts about killing myself, (b) I have thoughts about killing myself, but I would not carry them out, (c) I would like to kill myself, or (d) I would kill myself if I had the chance."

The survey ended with a list of 40 statements which the child must rate as "never or not true," "sometimes/somewhat true," or "often or very true." You can get the flavor of the 40 by these: "I cry a lot.... I try to hurt/kill myself on purpose.... I lie or cheat.... I run away from home.... I think about killing myself.... I am unhappy, sad, or depressed.... I feel lonely."

Answering this questionnaire would be a depressing psychological experience for an adult, much less a teenager. Yet the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services financed the writing of this garbage to the tune of \$408,000, and the University of Minnesota sponsored its development and distribution.

Indignant parents were able to stop the use of this survey in some schools, but it was administered in many local schools without the knowledge or consent of the parents. It's no

wonder why parents believe that Federal spending on education should be cut, and that public school educators should be forbidden to engage in psychological manipulation.

## Why Schoolchildren Are Depressed

Those who are concerned about the depression that seems to be pandemic among schoolchildren today are looking everywhere except the obvious places to identify the causes. Like the lesson of the famous Edgar Allan Poe story, "The Purloined Letter," the solution to the mystery is staring them in the face if they would only open their eyes and see. This obvious place is right out on the desks of the children, put there by the teacher, written by Ph.D. educators, and ordered by the school administrators. Some classroom exercises consciously teach children to be depressed and even suicidal.

Here is a typical example of the type of psychological lesson often forced on children without the knowledge or consent of their parents. The Reynolds Adolescent Depression scale was given to 12,000 high school students in states including Wisconsin, Illinois, Nevada, and South Carolina. It was developed by Dr. William Reynolds of the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

The Depression Scale, called "About Myself," gives students 30 privacy-invading statements of personal emotional feelings, and tells the child to decide if he feels this way "almost never, hardly ever, sometimes, or most of the time." The child is required to record his answers and turn them in to the teacher.

Here are some of the statements used in one Wisconsin high school. "I worry about school, I feel lonely, I feel my parents don't like me, I feel like hiding from people, I feel sad, I feel like crying, I feel that no one cares about me, I feel like running away, I feel like hurting myself, I feel that other students don't like me, I feel upset, I feel life is unfair, I feel I am bad, I feel I am no good, I feel sorry for myself, I feel mad about things, I feel worried, I feel like nothing I do helps any more."

The Suicide Ideation Questionnaire is even more depressing. It asks children how often they think about some two dozen items relating to death, killing, and suicide.

Here are some of the things that children are asked to reveal how often they think about: "it would be better if I were not alive, killing myself, when I would kill myself, people dying, death, what to write in a suicide note, writing a will, telling people I plan to kill myself, that people would be happier if I were not around, I wished I was dead, how easy it would be to end it all, killing myself to solve my problems, if others would be better off if I was dead, I wished I had never been born, ways people kill themselves, having a bad accident, life not being worth living, life is too rotten to continue, the only way to be noticed is to commit suicide, if I killed myself people will realize I am worth caring about, no one cares if I live or die, I wondered if I had the nerve to kill myself."

Is it any wonder that children are depressed, show stress, and commit suicide? Like the "purloined letter," the answer is right there in plain view on schoolroom desks.

After the students fill out the questionnaires, those children whose answers show signs of clinical depression are sent to the school counselor for consultation. Doing this without the knowledge or consent of the parents is defended by the program developers on the ground that parents may be part of the problem.

Using schoolchildren for psychological experimentation and manipulation is big business. This survey is reported to cost \$2 per student to administer. If the potential market consists of all high school students, and sales can be made to school administrators without ever consulting the student-consumer, the authors of these scraps of paper stand to make a mint of money. When parents discover and object to what is going on, they are stonewalled, given the royal run-around, and told they have no right to interfere in the school curriculum.

The public schools have an important function in our society, but using children as guinea pigs for those who want to carry on psychological experiments on a captive audience, is not part of that function.

## Drug Education Versus Parental Rights

One might think that the current campaign against drugs should include drug education courses in the schools. But parents who have looked into the matter think that so-called drug courses are not a solution and may even be part of the problem.

One of the so-called drug education programs parents are questioning is called "Quest." We say "so-called" because the first question is whether it is a drug education program at all.

The Quest program began in 1975 with a grant from the Kellogg Foundation in Battle Creek, Michigan. The "Skills for Living" units cover grades nine through twelve, and "Skills for Adolescence" is for grades six through eight.

In the latter curriculum, only one of seven units gives any facts about drugs and alcohol. The rest of the course is a strange mixture of psychological exercises. Here are some examples.

Students are asked to complete 22 statements called "Boundary Breakers," such as, "Sometimes I wish I had \_\_\_\_\_. I get in trouble when \_\_\_\_\_. One thing I'd never want to do is \_\_\_\_\_. The thing that worries me most is \_\_\_\_\_. When I think about the future I \_\_\_\_\_. Students are given an "Emotion clock." That means students must fill in the blanks for "feelings you've experienced at four-hour intervals during the past 24 hours."

"Skills for Living," which is the high school course, is likewise concerned with emotions, feelings, attitudes and beliefs, and does not contain one unit on drugs. The teacher's manual lists these units for study: Self-Concept, Feelings, Friends, Family, Marriage, Parenting, Financial Management, Life Planning, and Life Philosophy.

Suggested topics for student "journal writing" in the high school program includes "you and your feelings, you and your friends, you and your family, you and the person you marry, you and your own parenting, you and those great big beautiful dollars, you and what you will do, you and your concept of the universe."

The teacher's manual for "Skills for Adolescence"

contains these revealing passages: "All of the sessions in the curriculum contain questions designed to help students determine how they felt during the activity, what caused their feelings and reactions, what they thought, what they learned, and how they can apply that learning to their lives -- in short, questions that can assess the process of the session, as contrasted with the content. Feel free to include additional questions of your own [such as], What feelings did you have during this activity? What are your feelings right now?"

The teacher is told to take pupils through "energizer" exercises, such as fantasizing they are on a descending elevator, and the doors open on the fifth year of their lives. Programs like this are NOT drug education at all; they are a cheat on parents, pupils, and taxpayers.

Parents all over the country are demanding protection from this sort of group therapy by unlicensed psychologists. To meet this demand, the Kenosha (Wisconsin) School Board recently adopted a policy called "Privacy Rights in District Programs" and placed it in all student handbooks.

This policy states that "students and parental privacy rights shall be respected in all classroom, group counseling, group guidance and other student activities." It says further that "No student shall be required without the written and informed consent of parents or legal guardians, to participate in any group activities, exercises, or studies intended to reveal personal or familial information."

This new policy came about as the result of the work of a "human concerns committee" which was examining the health curricula. It became clear at this committee's meetings that some students and parents would be "uncomfortable" with the subject matter, techniques and films "relative to teaching values and sex education." The committee concluded that some materials infringed on religious values, and others were "probing" in nature.

After examining the parents' concerns, the Kenosha school board decided that students should have "privacy rights and not be required to participate without parental permission." The school board president said that "there are some things that students shouldn't feel they have to reveal."

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